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PROPOSALS

*For the Encouragement and Promoting of Religion and Learning
in the Foreign Plantations; And to Induce such of the Clergy
of this Kingdom, as are Persons of Sobriety and Abilities,
to accept of a Mission into those Parts.*

WHEREAS the Propagation of the Christian Faith, and the Increase of Divine Knowledge, amongst all sorts of Persons in His Majesty's Foreign Plantations, are the Wishes, Desires, and Prayers, of all Pious and Serious Christians; and such as are zealous of God's Glory, and the Salvation of Mens Souls. AND WHEREAS that Blessed Work, next under God, does principally depend upon the Abilities of the Clergy in those Parts, the Exemplariness of their Lives, and their Industry in Teaching others; WHEREAS ALSO the Clergy, that are already in the Plantations, as well as those who are to be sent thither, cannot (Humanly speaking) be so capable of Informing themselves, and of Instructing others in the design of Christianity, in the Nature of the Covenant of Grace, in the Meaning and Importance of the Articles of our most Holy Faith, and in the Nature and Extent of all Christian Duties, without the Assistance of some good Commentators upon the Holy Scriptures; and one, at least, or more of those Authors, who have best treated upon each, and every of those Points. WHEREAS ALSO for the supply of that Want, Men of Parts and addicted to Study, will hardly be induced to leave the Expectations they may have of better Encouragement and Improvement in their Native Country, to go to remote Parts and Climates less agreeable, without such Advantages, as will over-balance all Considerations inclining them to stay at home; and, especially, not without a competent Provision of such Books, as are necessary for their Studies in those Places where they are to serve: Few of them that go over from hence, being able to furnish themselves with so many Books as they shall need. AND, LASTLY, WHEREAS Insufficiency and Scandal in the Clergy of those places, in all probability, would be most successfully prevented, both in this and future Ages, should every Parochial Minister in the Plantations have a sufficient Library of well-chosen Books, of all those kinds before-mentioned, in which he might spend his time to his own Satisfaction, and with Improvement and Profit to himself and others.

TO PROMOTE THEREFORE so Blessed and Noble an End, as the propagation of Christian Knowledge in those Parts; and as well to encourage those who are there already employed in the Ministry, as also to invite other able Ministers over, and to furnish both, with proper Means for accomplishing so good a Work: IT IS HUMBLY offered to all that are hearty Well-wishers to the Souls of Men, and the Honour of their Saviour, to consider, and as they shall see Cause to favour these Proposals following.

1. THAT the Lord Bishop of London be pleas'd to make a Catalogue of what particular Books his Lordship shall judge most immediately and necessarily Useful, to make up a sufficient Library to a Parochial Minister in any Plantation, wherewith he may be sufficiently enabled both to Inform himself, and to Instruct others, in all the Necessary and Essential parts of Christianity.

2. THAT so many of such Libraries be sent by the Lord Bishop of London, by the hands of such as his Lordship shall Commission for that purpose, to be Appropriated and Affixed, one to each Parish in the Foreign Plantations, particularly those of *Mary-Land* and *Virginia*; and farther as the Fund to be raised shall enable.

3. THAT every Parochial Library shall be affixed in a decent and large Room of the Parsonage-House of such Parish, there to remain to the sole Use of the Minister thereof for the time being, unto all future Generations, and to be as UNALLIENABLE as any other the Rights and Dues of the Church, which are Ascertained by Law.

4. THAT

4. THAT in order to the Preservation of every such Library to succeeding Ages without Loss, as far as can be Humanly provided in any thing of that kind, there be made an exact Catalogue of the Books belonging to the Library of each Parish; and that every such Catalogue be fairly written in four Books of Vellum provided for that purpose: The first whereof to be left with the Lord Bishop of London for the time being; a second with his Commissary, or some chief Clergy-man in every of those Plantations where such Libraries are provided; and a third to remain in the respective Libraries themselves; and a fourth to be deposited in the Vestry of each of the said Parishes.

5. THAT the *COMMISSARY* be obliged, at least once in three Years, Personally to make a *Parochial Visitation*; And then, besides the Charge of his Duty in other respects, that it be Incumbent also upon him, particularly to Inspect the *Parochial Libraries*, and to see that none of the Books be Imbezell'd or Lost: And that the Church-Wardens of each Parish be also obliged, every Year, before the Visitation, to inform themselves in what Condition the said Books are, and to Present accordingly at the Visitation.

6. THAT for further Security to preserve them from Loss and Imbezelling, and that they may be known where-ever they are found, in every Book; on the one side of the Cover, shall be Letter'd these Words, *S U B. A U S P I C I I S W I L L I E L M I III.* on the other side the Name of the Parish to which these Books do belong: *EX. GR. E. BIBLIOTHECA DE MARY-TOWN: E. BIBLIOTHECA DE JAMES-TOWN, &c.*

7. THAT the Ministers of each Parish, their Heirs and Administrators, may be obliged, by Virtue of an Act of Assembly provided and made for that purpose, to make good what Books shall be Imbezelled or Lost by his fault.

MEANS of Obtaining such Parochial Libraries.

1. **T**hat Application be made to the Nobility, Clergy, and Gentry, for their Charitable Contributions to so Pious a Work; and especially that the Merchants and Traders to the Foreign Plantations be earnestly call'd upon, as Persons principally concern'd, to encourage this Design: It being most reasonable to expect, that in Gratitude to God, and the inhabitants of those Plantations, the more plentifully they have reaped of their Temporal Things, the more liberally they should sow to them in Spiritual Things.

2. That Application be also made to such Learned Authors as are now living, that they would bestow some of their own Books, which shall be judged useful to the Purposes aforesaid.

3. That, for the General Satisfaction of those who have advanced either in Books or Money to so Pious a Design, a full Account shall be published what Books have been given, what Summs have been obtained, and how the same have been laid out to the Purposes aforesaid.

Lastly, In Gratitude to the Principal Benefactors towards this Pious Design, all those who shall Contribute any thing thereunto, shall have their Names and respective Summs; And the Authors shall have the number of Books given by 'em, transmitted to Posterity, by being Registered in a Book kept for that purpose in each of the Libraries.

We do look upon this Design, as what will very much tend to Propagate Christian Knowledge in the Indies, being it will, in all likelihood, invite some of the more Studious and Virtuous Persons out of the Universities, to undertake the Ministry in those Parts, and will be a means of rendering 'em useful when they are there: And therefore as we shall contribute chearfully towards Promoting of these Parochial Libraries, so we hope that many Pious Persons will be found, who, out of Love to Religion and Learning, will also contribute thereto.

Tho. Cantuar.

H. Lond.

Fe. Ebor.

W. Cov. and Litch.

J. Norwich.

THE PRESENT STATE OF FAITH IN The Protestant Religion IN MARYLAND.

In the Year, 1691. His Majesty having graciously thought fit to take the Government of **MARY-LAND** into his own hands, and the Province into his Immediate Care: In May, 1692, an Act of Assembly pass'd for the Establishment of the Protestant Religion there, and for dividing of the **TEN COUNTIES** thereof into Five and twenty Parishes, each of which, one with another, are endowed with an Yearly Income of nigh Twenty thousand Pounds of Tabaco, to be raised perpetually by a Yearly Assessment of 40 Pound per Pole, upon all the taxable Persons in the Country; the Profits of which Tabaco, till such time as a sufficient Supply of Ministers shall be sent, (*Viz.* All which will Arise, over and above what shall go for the Maintenance of Six Divines sent thither already with the present Governor, by my **L O R D B I S H O P** of **L O N D O N** his pious Care, there being but three before in the Country) are Appointed for the Building of Churches in every Parish. But the Execution of that Act hath been in a manner wholly neglected, till it pleas'd His **M A J E S T Y** to confer the Government on the most Worthy and Excellent Person, **F R A N C I S N I C H O L S O N**, Esq; who since his Arrival in *Aug. 1694.* with an indefatigable Industry and Zeal to promote his **M A J E S T Y**'s Honour, the Int'rest of the Protestant Religion, and the Good of the whole Province, hath Revived and Reinfor'd the said Act, by another Additional one, for the Increase and Maintenance of Religion; hath Collected the Arrears, and is now Building a Fine Church at **A N N O P O L I S**, in **A R U N D E L** County, and by *Midsummer* next will (besides four or five which were begun before) have nine or ten Churches in very good forwardness, with as many Parsonage-Houses; to the Building of each of which, as of all the rest, His **E X C E L L E N C Y** hath given **5 t.** Sterling, and His Majesty's **S E C R E T A R Y** ten thousand Pounds of Tabaco to ten of the said Houses, *viz.* one in each County.

And that a perpetual Succession of *Protestant* Divines of the CHURCH OF ENGLAND, may be provided for the Propagation of the True Christian Religion in the said Colony, His EXCELENCY hath by the Consent of the Council and Burgesses in Assembly, promoted a Law (now humbly offered to His MAJESTY, together with two Acts for Establishing the *Protestant Religion* according to the CHURCH OF ENGLAND, for His Royal Confirmation) at his EXCELLENCE's Charge, vesting a Power in certain Trustees for Erecting one Free-School in each County, under the Patronage of his Grace the LORD ARCH-BISHOP of CANTERBURY: One of which is already begun at ANNO POLIS, towards the Building of which, his EXCELENCY hath given 50*l.* Sterling, the Secretary 5000, the Council 15000, and the Burgesses 45000 Pounds of Tobacco. And it is to be Endowed with 100*l.* Sterling *per Annum* for the Maintenance of one Master, and two Ushers, to whom his EXCELENCY will at present allow 25*l.* Sterling *per Annum*, during his Government, and the Secretary 2000 Pounds of Tobacco, so long as he continues in his

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his Office, for instructing the Youth of the said Province in ARITHMETICK, NAVIGATION, and all USEFUL LEARNING; but chiefly for the fitting such as are dispos'd to Study DIVINITY, to be further Educated at His Majesties COLLEGE ROYAL in VIRGINIA; in order, upon their Return, to be Ordained by the Lord Bishop of LONDON's SUFFRAGAN Residing in the Province, both for that purpose, and to supervise the Lives of the Clergy thereof; for whose Support also, at the Request and Recommendation of the Assembly, his EXCELLENCE hath settled a fair and competent Maintenance.

The Person now Deputed by the Lord Bishop of LONDON, to be his COMMISSARY in MARY-LAND for the propagation of our most Holy Religion amongst the Infidels, for the Inducement of Sober and Serious Young Divines, to go to the Foreign Plantations, and for the better qualifying them for so Noble and Christian an Employment, is now wholly busied in Collecting of PAROCHIAL LIBRARIES of Choice and Useful Books, for the perpetual Use of such of the Clergy, who shall now undertake that Voyage, and for all those who shall succeed them. AND certainly a more suitable Encouragement to Men of good parts and Inclinations, to go upon so Blessed a Mission, could not be thought of: For as it is Book, alone which will encourage the most Studious, Virtuous, and consequently the most Useful Persons to go over; so it is an encouragement that is in a manner necessary to be provided in the Foreign Plantations; since few or none at their first going over, are in a Condition to provide themselves therewith; and when they are there, Books are hardly to be met with by those who shall be able to buy them. And yet without a Competent Provision of several Useful and Necessary Books, it is morally impossible that any should be enabl'd to instruct their People.

And now that such Excellent Works are boyltly begun, and carrying on. What a happy Conjunction is this (which perhaps may not again recur) for Persons who are Bionly dispos'd, to give their helping hand towards such Blessed and Glorious Designs, as the propagating of true Christian Knowledge and Practice in places formerly so much Uncultivated therewith. Sure if he who Converteth a single Sinner from the Error of his Ways, shall bide a multitude of Sins, what abundant matter for comfortable Reflections upon a Death-Bed, shall that Person lay up, who shall contribute towards providing of the most proper and Genuine Means, next to the Divinely Inspired Writings, of Converting many poor Souls, not only in this, but in all future Generations, even so long as the Sun and Moon endureth.

Thomas Lawrence, Secretary
of Mary-Land.

Benedicat Deus Operi & Faventibus.

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